

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR AUTOCLAVING

Human Resources, Occupational Health and Safety
Western University, August 2012



DO NOT autoclave liquids containing bleach, formalin or glutaraldehyde

1 CHECK THAT STEAM IS ON

2 CHECK THAT JACKET TEMPERATURE HAS REACHED 121° C

3 CHECK CYCLE TYPE -
Liquids or dry goods?
Liquids need slow venting to avoid boiling
Do not process dry goods with liquids

4 SET CYCLE TIME OR SELECT PRE-SET CYCLE - previously verified by biological ampoules

5 LOAD AUTOCLAVE CORRECTLY
Liquid containers MUST be inside a container to hold entire contents
Bags MUST be placed in a plastic tray
Bags should be loosely sealed or open

6 CLOSE AUTOCLAVE DOOR
If applicable, ensure that radial arms engage firmly - do not wrench

7 START CYCLE
Wait until autoclave reaches 121° C. The autoclave may then be left unattended until the end of the cycle. If steam is leaking from the door, abort cycle, re-close and tighten door further.

8 AT COMPLETION OF CYCLE
Ensure that the pressure in the chamber is zero before opening door
Stand behind door and loosen radial arms slowly
Crack door open and wait for steam to dissipate before opening door wide
Use insulated gloves to remove goods
Use CAUTION when removing liquids.
Ensure that the liquids have cooled so that flashing does not occur

9 SPILLS AND BREAKAGE IN AUTOCLAVE
Remove pan containing spilled contents. Remove broken glass with tongs
Re-autoclave spilled or broken items before disposal

Departmental Autoclave Contact: _____ Western Ext.: _____